

**Series Title:** Joy in Christ Alone

**Text:** Philippians 3

### **Introduction:**

All too often we are surprised when hard times come because we think to ourselves, “What have I done to deserve this?” Which in many cases is nothing. However, there are many things in life that require hard work, patience, and sacrifice such as buying your first home, moving, taking on a new career, even retiring. We sacrifice knowing the benefit outweighs the cost. The reward was more than worth it.

Following Jesus is no different. When we give up something, go through something for Christ, the presence of Christ in our lives surpasses anything we face.

Paul encouraged and challenged the church in Philippi to be careful because there were those in their midst that were teaching they had to be good Jews who followed the Old Testament Laws and have Jesus in order to be saved. Paul corrected this teaching and made clear that salvation was by faith alone through Christ alone. Paul tells them he considers his past accomplishments garbage compared to knowing Jesus. Paul knew he could not trust in himself for the righteousness God required.

### **Discussion:**

What does Jesus mean when He says, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a hidden treasure” in Matthew 13:44?

What are some of the things we use to prove our own righteousness apart from Jesus? Paul knew he could not consider himself righteous apart from Jesus (see Philippians 3:9-11). What does this mean?

In Acts 8:20-21 Simon the sorcerer thought he could buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Why was this a bad thing?

Did Paul think he had already arrived at everything he taught others? (see Philippians 3:12-13). Why do you think he felt this way?

### **Examination:**

The Christian life is impossible to live if we seek to do it on our own strength. And even though Paul knew he had not arrived, he would not quit. He wanted to live his life in Christ as one who knew he would win. Winning as a Christian is not about competing against anyone, it's simply about following Jesus every day of our lives.

## **Unified in Christ**

In Philippians 3:16-17 Paul says, “**16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained. **17** Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.” What is Paul telling the church?

Is it important to pray, worship, gather with others who are seeking Jesus together? How does watching other Christ followers help you?

What does it mean our citizenship is in Heaven (see Phil. 3:20-21)?

## **Application**

What are some things that bring you Joy? These are not necessarily bad, but if we need to be on an ocean voyage, or always playing golf, or some other activity to find joy then we are depending too much on other things rather than Christ.

Review your life in Christ and thank God for what He has done. Can you see the blessings in the midst of your life? What is God teaching you today, and is the Joy of the Lord your strength? If not, He can be. Pray about everything, and celebrate Christ in your life.